

DARK CARTOGRAPHIES

Research background

The meta-research field is to engage understanding with the ontological conditions required to sustain a 'future of the future', underpinned by my own theories of Ecosophical Praxis, Tony Fry's Design Futuring and James Miller's seminal writings around the 'extinction of human experience'. The work examines a composite network of ecologies (cultural, biophysical and synthetic) that may currently be misunderstood, overlooked or under significant threat of disassembly. The creative vehicle becomes the practice-led conception, production and post examination of theoretically grounded, public facing artistic mediated art experiences. Each of these are intended as 'clearing spaces' through which new perspectives on these theories may be embodied. These perspectives may arise either during the experience or more feasibly afterwards through the work's capacity to stimulate subsequent conversational exchange. My praxis is therefore understood as a small, but worthwhile contribution towards creating the requisite cultural conditions that might in turn promote new kinds future sustaining conceptions of self, conceived in relationship to both community and its sustaining environment.

The specific questions for this work are,

- How might we best invoke embodied sensations and edge-of-perception visions relevant to a specific geographical location and its local nocturnal seasonality?
- How might we best suggest the implicit threat of seasonal disturbance (accorded by scientists to human activity) and allow its varying degrees to be experienced in real time through interactive processes?
- How might the interactive manipulation of media forms maximise embodied, immersive potentials of this work?
- How might the work better focus participant reflection upon relationships between our ontological conceptions and their implicit connection to "the extinction of human experience"?
- What avenues does this work suggest to subsequently extend audiences towards active participation in future debates and changed social practices?

The methodology was primarily practice-led and rooted in grounded theory. Use of questionnaires, interviews and conversational exchanges before and during showings provided further data for analysis - aiding the evolution and development of the work and its structures for the subsequent Australian showings.

Research contribution

Innovation arose in the creation of a unique form of audiovisual experience that cross-fertilised ideas from Behavioural Ecology, Media Arts and Sonic Design, with each disciplinary focus co-contributing to the shared problem (of ecology). Through a unique combination of infra red light, shadowing surfaces, computer vision and analysis, custom software and media, the work created a highly

three dimensional, illusion of the localised seasonal nuances of night.

Research significance

The project was a key work originally funded by three competitively won grants: Australia Council For the Arts Inter Arts, New Art Initiative, R&D Stage1, \$30,000 and Inter Arts, New Art Initiative, Presentation and Promotion Stage 2, \$80,000 and an Arts Queensland, New Work Grant, \$19,000. Dark Cartographies was commissioned by and garnered significant support from Kickarts Contemporary Arts Centre. It was supported by senior behavioural ecologists from UNSW, USYD and from Qld Department of Environment. The work became the basis for the major outdoor presentation for the long running site specific transmedia event Siteworks, Bundanon (renowned painter Arthur Boyd's historic residence), Australia in October 2014. A range of academic papers and chapters referencing this and its precursor works are in active planning and preparation phases.